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# Shall Unbelief Win?

A REPLY TO DR. FOSDICK

by

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY

"To sin by silence when we should protest
Makes cowards out of men. The human race
Has climbed on protest. Had no voice been raised
Against injustice, ignorance and lust,
The Inquisition yet would serve the law,
And guillotines decide our least disputes.
The few who dare must speak, and speak again,"
To right the wrongs of many.

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FOR THE FAITH

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# Shall Unbelief Win?

THERE appeared recently in a number of the religious papers, and has since been distributed in pamphlet form, the copy of a sermon, entitled, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" preached by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick in the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church, New York. The sermon has all the lucidity of thought and outline, and all the charm of word grouping which have won for Dr. Fosdick a well-deserved popularity. It is also free from the intolerance and arrogance which sometimes mar the writings of the so-called "liberal" school of theologians, and whose own illiberality and churlishness of spirit speak much more loudly than anything else they say.

This sermon by Dr. Fosdick will be read with varying emotions. Those who agree with the position held by Dr. Fosdick will hail it with delight as a sort of declaration of principles and an eloquent setting forth of the Fourteen Points of modernistic theology, a manual by which all on that side can march and drill and fight. Persons who are a-theological in their thinking, but who always applaud the revolt against what has been held, taught and believed in the Church, will also rejoice in it. But there are not a few others, who do not think of themselves as either "Fundamentalists" or "Modernists," but as Christians, striving amid the dust and the confused clamor of this life to hold to the Christian faith and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who will read this sermon with sorrow and pain. The Presbyterians who read it will deeply regret that such an utterance, so hopelessly irreconcilable with the standards of belief required by the Reformed Churches, could be made by the stated occupant of a Presbyterian pulpit, and apparently without any protest or wonder on the part of the Session of the Church, or the Presbytery to which the Church belongs. I have just read a letter from a

minister in the West in which the writer expresses the earnest hope that Dr. Fosdick will awaken to the inconsistency of his position and the non-Christianity of his views, and return, like many another wanderer, to the Cross of Christ. In this pious wish I am sure that all right-minded ministers who differ with Dr. Fosdick will join. One of his own school of thought, in conversation with me, declared that Dr. Fosdick must be retained to the Church because of his splendid emphasis on the social side of Christianity. None would deny that emphasis. But why not keep him for a greater service, for an emphasis upon the redemptive side of Christianity, the truth that takes in all else? We may feel that there are few instances of men who have gone as far from historic Christianity as he has gone ever returning to the faith. But what about Romanes? What about Reginald Campbell and his "New" Theology, now long since recanted? The citation of these names gives one hope that Dr. Fosdick too may yet speak in accents which will rejoice the hearts of believers instead of causing them anxiety and sorrow.

But a sincere desire for the return of Dr. Fosdick to evangelical faith, and the sense of pain and anxiety which his sermon occasions, must not be permitted to stand in the way of an emphatic and earnest rejoinder on the part of those who hold the opposite views, and who believe that the views held by Dr. Fosdick are subversive of the Christian faith. The greatest need of the Church to-day is a few men of ability and faith who are not afraid of being called "bigots," "narrow," "mediæval" in their religious thought. I do not mean to infer that Dr. Fosdick ever so thinks of those who repudiate his views, for he goes out of his way to rebuke those of his side who indulge in this childish pastime. But more and more there is a tendency to brand as illiberal, mediæval and narrow any man who differs from the current of popular religious thought, and declares it to be non-Christian in its tendencies. There is a great discussion in the pulpit and out of it as to what



the Church is to do or not to do. The state of opinion on this subject is singularly chaotic at present. But with all the diversity of opinion as to the work of the Church, there seems to be a pretty general agreement as to the one thing which the Church is *not* to do; Whatever the Church is to do or not to do, it is *not* to defend the faith; it is *not* to point out the errors and inconsistencies of those who stand as the interpreters of Christianity. This amazing agreement would have struck the Christian believers of almost any age in Church history, save our own, as a very extraordinary one. The writer of this article dissents entirely from this popular view, that when a Christian man hears or reads an utterance of Christian teachers and leaders which he believes to be irreconcilable with the Gospel the thing to do is to do *nothing*. Certainly this is not the course followed by those who are blasting at the Rock of Ages, and, consciously or unconsciously, adulterating distinctive and New Testament Christianity with the conclusions and vagaries of this world's life and thought. I do not believe in letting them hold the field all to themselves. I believe that in this day one of the greatest contributions that a man can make to the success of the Gospel is to contend earnestly and intelligently and in a Christian spirit, but nevertheless, CONTEND, for the faith.

Whatever one's theological position may be, one cannot but feel glad that Dr. Fosdick has spoken so frankly as he has. He, at least, cannot be charged with the offense of subtly corrupting Christian doctrines by pretending to honor them, while all the time evacuating them of their meaning. The recent book by Dr. Sterrett on "What Is Modernism?" is a good example of the fog and bog of much of the rationalistic movement in the Church. One is puzzled to know just what the man does believe. As an elder in one of our Presbyterian churches said of his own minister: "I really do not know what our minister believes!" He knew it was something strange, something perhaps out of harmony with historic

Christianity, but just why or how, he could not tell. But none can charge Dr. Fosdick with such obfuscation. Both rationalistics and evangelicals, therefore, will rejoice that Dr. Fosdick in this sermon leaves no reader or hearer in the least doubt as to what he believes, or disbelieves, about the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Fosdick uses the name "Fundamentalist." It is a grand name, and the man who claims it certainly puts the burden of proof on those who differ from him. But in recent years the name has come to be applied to a group, who indeed hold to conservative views, but whose chief emphasis is upon the premillennial reign of Christ on this earth. In this sense we are not interested in the controversy, for we do not believe that an opinion, conviction or expectation as to the time of the second Epiphany of Christ is a fundamental of the Christian faith. Historic Christianity has been wisely guided here, for no great body of the Christian Church has ever made an opinion about the TIME of Christ's advent an article of its creed. In any recent controversy between rationalists and evangelicals there has been a tendency on the part of the former to use chiliasm as a sort of smoke-screen and raise the cry of "premillenarian," whereas they know that the strongest and most influential currents of thought in conservative Protestantism run in an altogether different direction. The Princeton "school" of theology, for example, as summed up in Charles Hodge's famous eight reasons against premillennialism, has never had any chiliastic leanings whatever. But, as we shall see, Dr. Fosdick not only, and with some cause, protests against the premillenarian propaganda, but goes far beyond that and reduces the great New Testament teaching of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ to a "glittering generality."

Let us now take up, one by one, the different Christian doctrines mentioned in the sermon, and see how Dr. Fosdick views them. His claim is that a group of "Fundamentalists" are drawing a "dead line" in theology



across which no man may step and live. In stating the views of the so-called "Fundamentalists," which is of little consequence, Dr. Fosdick states his own views and those of his school of thought, and this is of the greatest consequence, for it clears the atmosphere and lets us see the religious chaos which reigns in rationalistic circles. They who, above all others, ought to read this sermon, are not the conservatives and not the rationalists, but the middle-of-the-road people who are fondly hoping that these schools are divided only by a difference in words and names, and that the two positions can and will be reconciled. Dr. Fosdick's sermon shows the impossibility and the non-desirability of such reconciliation. If Dr. Fosdick is right, his views ought to prevail, and the creed of the Presbyterian Church and of every other Church in Christendom, save the smaller humanitarian bodies like the Unitarians, and which are really creedless, as to either a written or unwritten creed, ought to be revised. If this is truth, then let it prevail, no matter how many churches sink into oblivion. But whether he is right, or whether the evangelical position is right, one thing all must now admit: both positions cannot be right; one MUST be wrong.

I. *The Virgin Birth.* Dr. Fosdick does not accept the Virgin Birth as an historic fact. He rejects what he calls "a special biological miracle" as the explanation for the way in which Christ came into the world. The Virgin Birth to him is merely an effort on the part of religious devotion and faith to account for the manifest superiority of the character and person of Jesus. But lest I should do him any injustice in my summary of this paragraph of his sermon, let me quote his own words:

"To believe in virgin birth as an explanation of great personality is one of the familiar ways in which the ancient world was accustomed to account for unusual superiority. Many people suppose that only once in history do we run across a record of supernatural birth. Upon the contrary, stories of miraculous generation are among the commonest traditions of antiquity. Espe-

cially is this true about the founders of great religions. According to the records of their faiths, Buddha and Zoroaster and Lao-Tsze and Mahavira were all supernaturally born. Moses, Confucius and Mohammed are the only great founders of religions in history to whom miraculous birth is not attributed. That is to say, when a personality arose so high that men adored him, the ancient world attributed his superiority to some special divine influence in his generation, and they commonly phrased their faith in terms of miraculous birth. So Pythagoras was called virgin born, and Plato, and Augustus Cæsar, and many more. Knowing this, there are within the evangelical churches large groups of people whose opinion about our Lord's coming would run as follows: those first disciples adored Jesus—as we do; when they thought about his coming, they were sure that he came specially from God—as we are; this adoration and conviction they associated with God's special influence and intention in his birth—as we do; but they phrased it in terms of a biological miracle that our modern minds cannot use. So far from thinking that they have given up anything vital in the New Testament's attitude toward Jesus, these Christians remember that the two men who contributed most to the Church's thought of the divine meaning of the Christ were Paul and John, who never even distantly allude to the virgin birth."

This speaks for itself. There was no Virgin Birth. The opening chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke are pure myth, and the alleged facts and acts of those pages are merely a pious, devout and natural effort of believing men to account for the personality of Jesus, in much the same way that the followers of Buddha, Zoroaster, Lao-Tsze and Mahavira tried to account for them. Not only does he repudiate the Virgin Birth, but he states that opinions on the subject are of little importance, in no way affecting vital Christianity. In this connection he makes the stock remark of the rationalists about the two great teachers of Christianity, St. John and St.



Paul, never even distantly alluding to the Virgin Birth. I have often been asked if Dr. Fosdick believes in the divinity, or better, the deity, of our Lord. I hope that he does, and even if in our New Testament we did not have the accounts of Matthew and Luke, the deity of Jesus Christ would everywhere confront us. We must grant, too, that God becoming flesh is a mystery which the Virgin Birth only partially explains. Nevertheless, that is the explanation given in the Gospels, and the *only* explanation given. Moreover, if we are to take that part of the Gospels as mere pious musing and guessing, will it not weaken our regard for the other parts? If for example the stories of the nativity of Jesus are mere human effort to account for a personality who defied human classification, then who can find fault with the man who says that the accounts of the Crucifixion of Jesus are merely imaginations on the part of His followers who wished to have Him die a glorious and sacrificial death? Or that the accounts of the Resurrection are merely the tributes of devotion and admiration, not the records of fact, but stories arising out of the conviction that Christ was too great and holy a man to be held of death, and thus in keeping with other tales of the reappearance and reincarnation of great men? And so with the Ascension and the Second Epiphany. The moment we take this view of the account of the Virgin Birth, do we not prepare the way for the repudiation of any other part of the Gospel story by any man who wills to do so?

No intelligent Christian is disturbed by the reference that neither John nor Paul "even distantly allude" to the Virgin Birth of Jesus. It is partly amusing and partly irritating, the way the rationalists make use of Paul and John. When they are talking on the Virgin Birth of Jesus they cite Paul and John as the great authorities of the Church, and yet men who are silent on this subject. But when they are on a subject such as the Atonement, or the fate of the unbelievers in the next world, there John and Paul appear in an altogether

different light. Now no one knows whether John wrote the Gospel that bears his name; probably not; and as for Paul, he took the simple teachings of the Galilean peasant and grafted upon them a mass of doctrines about sin and atonement and justification by faith which are entirely foreign to true Christianity. For this reason it is amusing to hear them cite John and Paul as on either side when it comes to the Virgin Birth. The fact is that both St. John and St. Paul above all other writers of the New Testament teach the Incarnation of God in Jesus and the supernatural manner of the entrance of the Son of God into this world. The fact that Paul, for example, while he says that Christ was born of a woman, does not say that He was born of a virgin, in no way invalidates the authority of Matthew or Luke, or implies that he had never heard of the birth of "that holy thing" in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

J. A. MacCulloch, in the article on Virgin Birth in Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, points out that in the case of Zoroaster and Buddha, to which Dr. Fosdick adverts, actual physical generation through father and mother is implied in the birth stories of Buddha, and in the birth stories of Zoroaster we have his "actual physical generation." Supernatural elements are added, but as Dr. MacCulloch clearly points out, there is no ground whatever for saying that the stories of the births of Zoroaster and Buddha are comparable to the New Testament account of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. But this is a field into which it is not necessary for me to go, for even if there did exist stories of the births of great religious leaders through a virgin and without ordinary process of generation, this would in no way repudiate or invalidate the sublime account in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, which tell of the conception of Jesus by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Birth was universally accepted in the early Church, and it can hardly be denied that to reject the Virgin Belief is to break with historic Christianity. The first denials



of the Virgin Birth came mainly from deistical writers in the eighteenth century. This rejection on the part of the deists is now revived by their lineal descendants, the rationalists. It is important to note that while Matthew and Luke are the only Gospels which give the account of the Virgin Birth, these two Gospels are also the only Gospels which profess to record the events of the birth of Jesus. If in John and Mark we had a narrative of the events of the birth of Jesus, and among those events we should find no mention of the Virgin Birth, then the omission would indeed perplex and trouble us. But John and Mark do not profess to record the events of the birth of Jesus, and therefore their omission of the Virgin Birth is insignificant. Certainly no one would be justified in drawing the inference which Dr. Fosdick seems to draw, namely, that because John and Mark are silent on the subject they did not accept the fact of the Virgin Birth.

As for St. Paul, it is well to remember that he makes hardly any reference to the earthly life of Jesus beyond the facts of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. In his work on the Virgin Birth of Christ, Dr. J. Orr points out the indisputable fact that St. Paul regarded the entry of Christ into the world as no ordinary event, and that in speaking of it Paul always employs "some significant peculiarity of expression," such as, "God sending His Son" (Romans 1: 3; 5: 12); "becoming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2: 7); and the unusual Greek form in Galatians 4: 4, "born of a woman." The simple and yet majestic accounts of Matthew and Luke are integral parts of the narratives and cannot be regarded as interpolations; neither can they be compared, as one would infer Dr. Fosdick compares them, with the pagan myths of miraculous generation. The reader knows that he is moving in a different world.

One would gather from Dr. Fosdick's sermon that belief in the Virgin Birth is of no matter, even to an evangelical Christian, and that it is quite possible to believe in the divinity of Christ without believing in the

Virgin Birth. If we put the matter this way, and imagine the New Testament to stand as it is, minus the narrative of the Virgin Birth, that is, that none of us had ever heard of the Virgin Birth, then, of a truth, we could still believe in the divinity of Christ. But when one says, "May I not dismiss the Virgin Birth and still believe in the divinity of Jesus?" the only sensible and logical answer is, "No." And for this reason: The man who rejects the tremendous miracle given in the Gospels as explanation for the entry into this world of Jesus Christ shows thereby that although he may claim to believe in the divinity of Christ, his idea of that divinity must differ from that of those who accept the Virgin Birth. By their fruits ye shall know them, and the real test is the practical test. Applying this test we discover that the great number of those who reject the Virgin Birth also reject the divinity of our Lord. Theoretically, the rationalists might argue that they could still believe in the divinity of Christ although rejecting the Virgin Birth; but as matter of fact and history, the great number of those who repudiate the Virgin Birth also repudiate the divinity of our Lord. If a man really accepts the wonderful fact of the Son of God becoming flesh and entering our humanity he will not stumble at the only New Testament account of the manner of that entry, but will find in it a ground of faith and an instance of the marvellous condescension of the God of all grace. If we had the story of the Son of God without the story of His Virgin Birth, certainly men would outdo the pagans in their wild dreams and guesses as to the manner of His coming. But against all that God has provided by giving us the revelation of the fact that Jesus was "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

Dr. Fosdick is not a Presbyterian, but he stands in a Presbyterian pulpit and gets his bread from a Presbyterian congregation. In view of this fact how can his holding the purely naturalistic account of the stories of the birth of Jesus be in harmony with his preaching



in the pulpit of a Church whose Creed, never revoked, declares (The Confession of Faith, Chapter VIII, Article XI), "The Son of God—when the fulness of time was come did take upon Him man's nature—being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance"? This article of the creed may be impossible for the "modern" mind to hold; it may be myth and rubbish. But myth or fact, truth or rubbish, it is a solemn declaration of the Church from which Dr. Fosdick takes his bread.

II. *The Inspiration of the Bible.* Dr. Fosdick describes two ideas of the inspiration of the Bible, neither of which, however, are held by a great number of intelligent and devout Christians. On the one side there is what he calls the "static (note the word, for it is *the* word of the rationalists, and should it go out of currency, we know not what they would do) and mechanical theory of inspiration." According to this theory, all the parts of the Bible from the Dukes of Edom to the thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians were inerrantly dictated by God to men a good deal "as a man might dictate to a stenographer." We pass by the irreverence of this statement, with its offense not so much against orthodoxy as against good taste, and remark that those who hold the New Testament idea of inspiration, that holy men of old "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," have never thought of the Holy Ghost dictating to Moses, Isaiah or St. Paul as Dr. Fosdick, for instance, to use his own illustration, might dictate one of his sermons to a stenographer. Nor have the multitudes of Christians ever felt that for Paul to remind Timothy to fetch the cloak which he left at Troas, in the house of Carpus, required the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or any kind of inspiration save that of the gloom and damp of the Mamertine dungeon. But there are places in the writings of St. Paul where he makes the most careful and solemn claim to divine inspiration, and that what he declares, that is, his magnificent interpretation of the Gospel of Christ,

has been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. Every intelligent Christian knows that it is not correct to say that Christianity depends upon the Scriptures in the historical sense, for Christianity had established itself in the world as a conquering and regenerating power before there was any New Testament. The New Testament was the expression of that Christian life and faith and the record of its establishment. Therefore, every intelligent Christian knows too that while Christianity came before the New Testament, if the New Testament is false, Christianity also must be false. The great question at issue is not any peculiar theory of inspiration, but the credibility and authority of the Bible. Personally, I have never been troubled by the controversies which have raged over the question of inspiration, ranging all the way from harsh, petrified and illogical theories, which would make a genealogical catalogue with its graveyard of names of equal authority with St. Paul's statement of the redeeming and reconciling love of God in Christ—all the way from that to Dr. Fosdick's rationalistic theory, namely, that God revealed Himself, or rather misrevealed Himself, in crude and false ways in times past, sanctioning and approving much that was false, but gradually drew away from that misrepresentation and gave a clearer knowledge of Himself in the New Testament, but which representation will undoubtedly be much improved on in the future, since there is no reason to believe that this "progressive" revelation came to a sudden stop with St. John or St. Paul. For me the great question is this: Can we rely upon the Bible as giving us the great facts as to what God requires of man, and that plan of redemption which God has revealed through Jesus Christ? Does it contain the way of Life Eternal? If so, it is inspired of God. Theories of inspiration are of little consequence, for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is like the wind—thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

But although there is such a thing as accepting the



inspiration of the Bible and not being sure as to how it was inspired, that is an altogether different thing from a theory of inspiration which breaks down the whole authority of the book. Whenever we hear men speak as Dr. Fosdick does about the Bible, the question of a mode of inspiration sinks out of sight, and the greater question emerges: Do these men believe that the Bible has any special authority? Do they believe that God spake in times past by the prophets to the fathers in any clearer note than He did to Socrates, Confucius or Buddha? Do they really believe the prophets, to quote the words of Dr. Gore in his recent and notable book, "Belief in God," "were in touch—as other men were not—with reality, with the real God; and that in a long and continuous process, more or less gradual, He was really communicating to them the truth by which men could live, both about the Divine nature and purpose and about human nature?" The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church commences with a declaration about the Scriptures which says: "Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased God to reveal Himself and declare His will unto His Church." One puts down a sermon of Dr. Fosdick and all his school with the impression that the light of nature *was* sufficient for the salvation of men, and that the Bible is but a reflection of that light of nature, coming from man only, and not from God.

I am sure that even the most emancipated modernists will regret Dr. Fosdick's unhappy comparison of the Bible with the Koran, and all believers in the Bible, and who not only talk about it but read it, will indignantly repudiate his assertion that most of the repulsive ideas which are taught in the Koran are taught somewhere in the Bible. I deny that the Bible teaches that "God is an Oriental monarch, fatal submission to his will men's

chief duty, the use of force on unbelievers, polygamy and slavery." When we come to appalling statements such as this, the best plan is not to argue but to deny.

## PART II.

### III. *The Second Advent.*

I have already intimated that I do not adhere to the premillennial school of the New Testament interpretation. I do believe that the Church has been inexcusably silent and negligent in its teaching as to the future chapters in the drama of Divine redemption, and that this wide neglect has prepared the way for much of the extravagance of the popular premillenarian. Thoughtful conservatives are not a little perplexed over the attitude of some premillenarians, and sometimes feel that their defense of historic Christianity is not altogether a helpful one; and when we hear our premillenarian brethren dwell with more emphasis and zeal upon the mechanism of the temporal kingdom that is to be set up here upon this earth than they do upon the redeeming love of Christ and the conquest of human nature through the mild reign of the Holy Spirit, we are tempted to become impatient with them and to cry out as the princes of the Philistines did, when, about to campaign against Israel, they saw David and his men in their ranks, and said to Achish, "What do these Hebrews here?" But there is one thing about the premillenarian concerning which there is no doubt, and that is his loyalty to the Person and the claims of Jesus Christ. However much he may be tempted to write history before it has been made, his absolute loyalty to the Deity of Jesus, His Atonement, and His reign of righteousness and judgment, is never questioned. This is far more than we can say about the rationalists and the modernists. We feel that it is but a poor Christ that they have left us, and only a shadow of the tremendous personality of the New Testament.

If perchance the premillenarian has been a little too sure in his exegesis and in casting the horoscope of the



Church and the race, the rationalist has gone to the other extreme and has reduced the great doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ to a mere figure of speech. So Dr. Fosdick regards it, for he says, "They" (that is, the rationalists and modernists) "they, too, say 'Christ is coming!' They say it with all their hearts, but they are not thinking of an external arrival on the clouds. They have assimilated as part of the Divine revelation the exhilarating insight which these recent generations have given us, that development is God's way of working out his will. Man's music has been developed from the rhythmic noise of beaten sticks; man's painting from the crude outlines of the cavemen; man's architecture from the crude huts of primitive men. And these Christians, when they say that Christ is coming, mean that slowly it may be, but surely, His will and principles will be worked out by God's grace in human life and institutions, until He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied!" The best possible comment on this idea of the Second Advent of Christ and the final jurisprudence of our species is to set it alongside the mysterious yet mighty utterances of Jesus in the last part of Matthew's Gospel, or the equally mysterious and tremendous utterances of St. Paul and of St. Peter. Whatever Christ or Paul or Peter mean or do not mean, we can be sure of this, that they imply a process of progress and arrival at perfection which is something far different from Dr. Fosdick's mild working out of the tangles of life. The Bible teaches progress and development and a final arrival at a state of universal peace and righteousness, but it also teaches that crisis and cataclysm play their part in bringing the great goal which seers, prophets and poets have saluted afar off and contemplated through their tears. The first advent of Christ was not accounted for by any long-drawn-out natural development, although it did come in the "fulness of time," and it is quite possible that the Second Advent will be just as much of an intervention and interruption as the first advent was. The rationalists do not do jus-

tice to this plain portion of the eschatological teaching of the Bible. And even were their absurd dream to come true, even should the world by the slow working out of the powers and principles now lodged in humanity arrive at moral perfection, still the goal would not have been reached, for there would yet remain a fearful contrast between this perfect creature and his environment. So Father Tyrrell, a much more thoughtful modernist than those who to-day are so vocal, asks: "Shall progress ever wipe away the tears from all eyes? Prolong life as it will, can progress ever conquer death, with its terrors for the dying, its tears for the surviving? Can it ever control the earthquake, the tempest, the lightning, the cruelties of a nature indifferent to the lot of man?" What Father Tyrrell meant by these questions was that not only man, but man's environment, the platform of his civilization and life, must be changed and reconstructed. Have Dr. Fosdick and his fellow-rationalists any prescription for the securing of that great end? They have not, and they know that they have not. Thus, even if it had not been revealed in Scripture, common sense and common experience would demand some such intervention and summing up of human affairs as is involved in the doctrine of the Second Advent.

Then we shall have not only a Messianic race of redeemed men, but a Messianic world, in which there shall be complete and blessed peace not only between man and God, and between man and man, but between man and the beast and between man and the earth. This was the age saluted by rapt Isaiah when he sang, "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in



all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The great error of the Rationalists in their sketch of the future and in their dealing with the New Testament teaching of the coming of Christ, is that they confine themselves to laws and principles, and forget that there is something beyond this. "And these Christians," writes Dr. Fosdick, meaning himself and other Rationalists, "when they say that Christ is coming, mean that slowly it may be, but surely, His will and principles will be worked out by God's grace in human life and institutions, until He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." Evangelical, New Testament Christians, believe that too. But they believe that the coming of Christ means more than just the establishment of justice in the earth. To them it means also the beatific vision; it means the Presence and the companionship of Him Whom, not having seen, we yet love; on Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable. This and scores of passages like it in the New Testament can have only one meaning, namely, that rich and precious though the present relationship of the believer with Jesus Christ is, there is something yet greater in store. When, according to the old legend, Jesus appeared to Thomas Aquinas and said to him, "Thomas, thou hast written well of Me; what wouldst thou have?" the great schoolman replied, "Thyself, Lord!" "Thyself, Lord!" that is the consummation of the Christian life and experience. Here we have it in faith and anticipation, but when Christ comes the second time we shall have it in glorious reality. Righteousness is to come, and the Church is to be vindicated, and sinners are to be judged, and crooked ways made straight, and the rough places plain; but it ought not to be necessary, yet apparently is, to remind the rationalists that Christ is more than a principle of righteousness and justice, and that the coming of Him upon Whose breast John leaned at the Supper, Who said to the fishermen of Galilee, "Follow Me!" to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?"

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and to Paul, "Why persecutest thou Me?"—the coming of this Christ must mean nothing less than a personal and blessed and glorious manifestation of Himself to those who have believed on Him, and who, amid the shadows and trials of this world, have followed Him as Lord and Master. To the Rationalists this blessed consummation of the Christian experience seems to mean nothing. They talk about Christ as if He were only a name for a principle, and seem not to know that Jesus to Whom Thomas cried out, "My God and my Lord!" And when Christ comes, how shall they greet Him who in this life, and even as His ministers, have spoken of Him in such a way as to lead men to believe that He was not conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary; that He did not take our place and bear our sins on the cursed tree; that He did not rise again from the dead, and that He will not come again in glory? How shall they greet Him, and what shall they say to Him? To talk acceptably to skeptical university boys, or persons inclined to unbelief, and write for rationalistic papers, is one thing; it is another thing to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Now those great swelling words about "progressive" revelation, "dynamic" Christianity, "the modern mind," etc., etc., sink and shrivel and disappear. No minister should preach or write a sermon which he would not be willing to place in the hands of Jesus should He appear in person. Could the authors of these rationalistic sermons, sermons which tend to destroy men's faith in the Eternal Son of God as their alone Redeemer, meet Christ with confidence, and would they feel like placing in His hands the sermon which has denied Him before men?

IV. *The Atonement.*

Dr. Fosdick does not dwell at length on this central doctrine of Christianity, but in the very sentence in which he caricatures the traditional evangelical belief in the Atonement, he reveals his complete and profound aversion to the New Testament teaching on that great and mysterious subject. He thus describes the theory



of the Atonement as held by the Evangelical School: "That the blood of our Lord, shed in a substitutionary death, placates an alienated Deity and makes possible welcome for the returning sinner."

Every Christian knows that there is a difference between the *fact* of the Atonement and any *theory* of it. But it is inconceivable that any man should receive the fact of the Atonement, the death of Christ for sin, and not be interested in the explanation of that fact. The rationalists now write of the theology of St. Paul as an intelligent man's honest effort to give some rational explanation of how he is saved, and how it is that the death of Christ makes possible the forgiveness of sin. Why, may we ask, are the rationalists not interested in giving some explanation of the Atonement? If the great primary fact of Christianity, the death of Christ for the remission of sins, is the rock upon which their feet stand, their refuge and their hope, why are they not more interested in the meaning of that fact? Why is it that the only time they talk about the Atonement is when they are assailing the traditional views of historic Christianity? Why is it that the only interest they betray in the Atonement is to deny the explanations of other believers? St. Paul, whom Dr. Fosdick quotes as one of the two great Christian teachers, made the death of Christ, and the substitutionary and vicarious explanation of that death, the one grand theme of his preaching. To the Corinthians he said, "I delivered unto you, *first of all*, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Is there in the whole world to-day a rationalist or a modernist who can say that to any city or church where he has preached?

At the close of his sermon Dr. Fosdick says, "It is almost unforgivable that men should tithe mint and anise and cummin, and quarrel over them, when the world is perishing for the lack of the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith." He thus likens the question of the Virgin Birth of our Lord, the Inspiration of the Bible, the Second Advent of Christ, and the

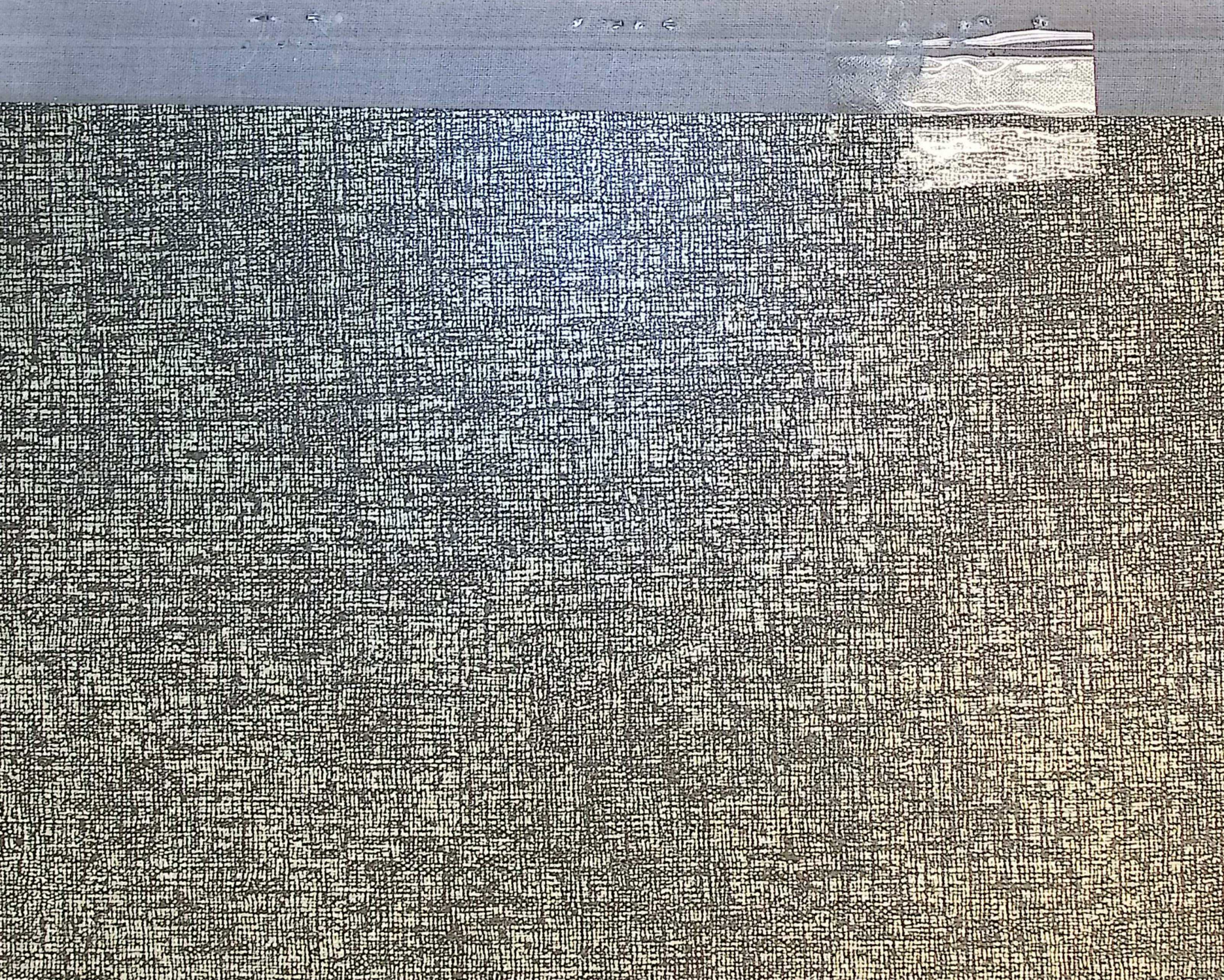
Atonement to mint, anise and cummin. To me this seems an almost unpardonable flippancy on the part of one who speaks as a teacher of Christianity. Especially astounding it is to hear a man so speak of opinions about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Francis Turretin, whom Dale calls the greatest of Calvinistic theologians, evidently thought differently about the Atonement, for he wrote of it as "the chief part of our salvation, the anchor of Faith, the refuge of Hope, the rule of Charity, the sure foundation of the Christian religion, and the richest treasure of the Christian Church. So long as this doctrine is maintained in its integrity, Christianity itself and the peace and blessedness of all who believe in Jesus Christ, are beyond the reach of danger; but if it is rejected, or in any way impaired, the whole structure of the Christian faith must sink into decay and ruin."

Our chief complaint against the rationalist and modernist is not their writings and sayings about the Deity of our Lord, the Bible, the Second Advent, but their rejection of the one great truth of Christianity, that through His death we have remission of our sins and are justified with God.

Dr. Fosdick contends against a conspiracy on the part of those whom he calls "Fundamentalists," and who perhaps so name themselves, to put out of the Church all those who do not agree with them in every particular. I have not heard of such a conspiracy and have never been asked to join it. At the same time, I believe that as long as the Presbyterian Church has not abandoned and repudiated its Confession of Faith, any man in any of its pulpits holding and declaring the views of Dr. Fosdick occupies an anomalous and inconsistent position. Their "New" Theology seems to carry with it a "new" morality also. As for putting them out, that could easily be done, for they are a small minority in the Church; although at present the *vocal* minority. But I am coming to think less and less of excision and excommunication as a means of preserving the Church from false teaching, not because of any base and ignoble fear on the part of



those who might so proceed of being called "heresy hunters," "mediæval," etc., but because I am convinced that the far more useful course to pursue is to declare the whole counsel of God so clearly and fearlessly that the whole world may know that there is a difference between what is Christianity and what is not Christianity. However Dr. Fosdick and his companions may worry about processes of excision and ecclesiastical trial, and so being put out of the Church, the sad thing is that in the minds of thousands upon thousands of Christians they are already *out* of the Church, and no act of an ecclesiastical court could make the fact more real. Our duty is to pray that they may be brought back into the Church and help to build up and adorn where hitherto they have only wounded His mystical Body, which is the Church.

In his celebrated Autobiography, John Stuart Mill, in describing the attitude of his father towards Christianity, says that he looked with indignation upon the identification of the worship of the Christian God with Christianity. The son confesses the same aversion, and thinks the day will come when we shall have a Christianity with God left out. For me this sums up better than anything I have ever read the menace of the rationalistic and modernist movement in Protestant Christianity. The movement is slowly secularizing the Church, and if permitted to go unchecked and unchallenged, will ere long produce in our churches a new kind of Christianity, a Christianity of opinions and principles and good purposes, but a Christianity without worship, without God, and without Jesus Christ.

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